

# Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Reclamation

## FAQ Facebook Session about coal mining, July 17, 2013

Hi, I'm Jack McGriffin in the Indianapolis office of the Div. of Reclamation. I have worked in special projects for the division for 30 years and have gained experience in many different aspects of coal mining and reclamation.

Today, I would like to introduce coal mining and reclamation to folks who may not have any experience or detailed knowledge of this process. It has come a long way from the days of our grandparents and the images portrayed in Hollywood of mining - pick and shovel.

We will also answer your questions as time allows. I will answer to the best of my knowledge. If you have questions requiring greater detail or discussion, I will provide contact info for our field technical staff in Jasonville.



This is a map of the coal region of Indiana - the southwest fifth of the state, encompassing 20-25 counties historically. A dozen to 15 of those counties are actively coal producers today.

- Reclaimed coal mines make some of the best hunting.

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Yes, but please remember that these are private lands and you should make sure to obtain permission to hunt.

- Being from Kentucky and understanding how the current administration in the white house has impacted coal mining there, I'm curious as to any repercussions felt in Indiana mining?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) We just continue to apply the rules and regulations in a manner to protect public health, safety and the environment. We have not

seen significant change in production or new mine permits submittals. Right now, we are on an even keel.

- I saw someone drilling at a reclaimed coal mine in Warrick County. Do they do test drills for coal? Or would that be for oil?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Those are two possibilities. Another possibility maybe test holes to locate subsidence or voids left from that previous mining operation. So, there could be more than one explanation. If you want to know more specifics, send us an email with more info at [ActiveMiningEnforcement@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:ActiveMiningEnforcement@dnr.IN.gov)

- What exactly is a processing site?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Dustyn - I presume you are talking about a coal processing plant on the coal mine location. If so, those "processing plants" are preparing the raw coal for shipment to specific customers. The coal is broken, washed, and sized according to the needs of the customer. If you mean something different, please let me know.

- What is done to monitor sediment contamination of surface water and runoff to rivers and streams?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) All surface water drainage from active coal mines must pass through collection points (holding ponds). Water is tested regularly by our inspectors and must satisfy the water quality standards as specified in their permit.

- Are there any plans to start mining back in Chandler, IN near where the AMAX Ayrshire used to be?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Angie - You can get the answer to this question from our permits section at [ActiveMiningEnforcement@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:ActiveMiningEnforcement@dnr.IN.gov).

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) I don't know of any at the moment, but things change quickly and the permits section will have the most up-to-date info.

- the map shows several mines as inactive, are they underground or above ground mines? and once a mine goes inactive does that mean there is no longer any coal there? are inactive underground mines imploded after becoming inactive or left open as underground storage facilities, etc?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Inactive means that they are not currently producing for any number of reasons. The permit could have run out and they are waiting for renewal, equipment could have broken down, transportation issues, switching customers, etc. Even permitted inactive mines are still inspected to ensure that health and

safety standards are maintained according to the permit. This applies equally to surface and underground mines. Also, no, underground mines are not imploded. The permit requires a roof stabilization that is left in place to support the roof once mining is complete.

- I'd like to get more information on mines in the Vigo County. Where could I get that?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Check the map that is posted above. For even greater detail per mine, contact our permits section in Jasonville at [ActiveMiningEnforcement@dnr.in.gov](mailto:ActiveMiningEnforcement@dnr.in.gov)

- is coal mining just limited to this area of the state by regulations or abundance of supply?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) It is limited by where it is. We are part of the Illinois Coal Basin which forms in southwestern Indiana and runs south and west. It dips as it runs west so that Illinois is primarily underground mining whereas Indiana is primarily surface.

- Oh cool! Didn't know we had coal mines here!
- my grandparents were coal miners
- Is anyone utilizing any of the underclays from these sites commercially? Besides Clay City Pottery?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) I have known of some usage like this over the years and believe it still happens. That is not something we would track as part of our program, but we might be aware of simply as a result of being on the mines frequently. If you have a specific need or interest, please contact me separately at [jmcgriffin@dnr.in.gov](mailto:jmcgriffin@dnr.in.gov) and I will try and pursue details for you.

- Did not know this.
- Very cool
- I had no idea there were that many

**The two photos on the left show unreclaimed mines lands prior to the implementation of today's comprehensive restoration requirements. Our restoration section designs and oversees construction projects to restore these lands and remove environmental and public health hazards. The two pics on the right demonstrate proper reclamation techniques of these sites.**



- it is so hard to find the balance between use and abuse of resources

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Angie - You make a great point and one that we should all remain aware of. The current mining laws ensure coal extraction is a temporary disruption and that long-term land uses remain viable and protected.

- It is nice to see reclaimed sites

**Indiana is historically a top ten coal-producing state in the nation. We produce 32 -36 million tons per year and approx. 8-10,000 acres of ground are disturbed annually. 8-10,000 acres of ground are restored as well each year.**

- Does the DNR buy any of these properties once they are mined out to convert for recreational use?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) This has happened more in the past than the present due to changes in reclamation laws, although it is still a possibility. Many State DNR properties are old surface mined areas: Greene-Sullivan State Forest, Shakamak State Park, Scales Lake (now a city facility in Boonville), Chinook state fishing area, and the Redbird State Recreation Area for off-road vehicles just to name a few.

- Where could I find specific number of acres restored and disturbed from the last few years in Indiana?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Send me an email at [jmcgriffin@dnr.in.gov](mailto:jmcgriffin@dnr.in.gov) and I will see what I can put together for you. Let me know what specifically you are interested in.

- Will we be affected by the coal mining industry, as Kentucky has significantly been?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Kentucky mines different types of coal using different methodologies and very different terrain. It is difficult to compare current conditions and potential impacts to these two very different states. Indiana production remains at historical levels.

- DNR have any plans of purchasing more reclaimed coal mines in the future?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) The Div. of Reclamation is not involved in the purchase of any lands of any sort. You can send an email to our land acquisition division at [nheinzelman@dnr.in.gov](mailto:nheinzelman@dnr.in.gov), Nick Heinzelman, Division Director of Indiana Heritage Trust.

- Please do not mine Glendale Fish & Wildlife area. It was attempted a few years ago but voted down. Truly a hidden beauty in Daviess County Indiana!
- Harmony State Park is among those acres restored. Awesome place to camp and watch the wildlife. Good cycling and hiking. Have seen several signs noting the restoration process on various acres in coal country. Not to mention the oil wells in fields in several counties, like the wells in the melon fields of Posey County.
- I wonder how the current administration's plan to force use reductions in relation to coal are going to affect coal jobs in this state. The current POTUS did pose that he was going to make the costs too high to continue using this resource.

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) I am not well versed enough to comment on federal or even State energy regulations and potential impacts on Indiana's industry. I can say that we are mining coal at normal levels and may even see an increase this year. Indiana's bituminous coal is a hi...



### **[DNR: What is Coal?](#)**

**I only have about 10 minutes left so if you have any other questions about coal mining in Indiana, now is the time to ask.**

- How much coal do you allocate each year for Santa Claus to give to bad children?

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) We believe that coal is just a young diamond and consider it a gift, not a penalty. We hope everyone gets coal for Christmas.

- Do you have any history on the residence or companies of coal creek Indiana in fountain county south of Covington  
Any historical data  
Would love to get something emailed to me

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Noah - You need to check the Indiana Geological Survey site for Coal Mine Information System at <http://igs.indiana.edu/CMIS/>  
This will be your best source for that info.



### [Indiana Geological Survey](#)

[igs.indiana.edu](http://igs.indiana.edu)

The Indiana Geological Survey: The resource for geological information in the state of Indiana.

- Thank you
- I grew up there and knowing how big it used to be til now is unimaginable
- I would like to know how coal mines are made, and how to find structure such as old roadways that lead into, and out of the old coal pits. Where can I find this info. I've searched the internet and not had much luck.

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Sam - Try this link to the Coal Mine Information System. We partnered with the Geological Survey to map historical mine areas in Indiana. That will show you historical surface and underground mining activity.  
<http://igs.indiana.edu/CMIS/>

[Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) For current mining activity, you may access <http://www.in.gov/dnr/reclamation/> - Click on View Active Coal Mining Permits (for current or active mining activity)

- [Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) Please remember that this is private property and some may be dangerous. Do not pursue without permission.

**Thank you for all of your time and interest. Lots of great questions and I hope this has been useful for you. Coal mining is kind of a secret in Indiana and we always enjoy sharing this info to further serve the public. Please visit our website at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/reclamation/> and continue to send us your questions.**

- thank you for doing it.